

# HOSEA

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- **Prophesied mid-8<sup>th</sup> century B.C.**
- **Active for about 38 years during the rise of the Assyrians**
  - “The word of the Lord that came to Hosea son of Beeri during the reigns of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, kings of Judah, and during the reign of Jeroboam, son of Jehoash, king of Israel.” Hosea 1:1
- **Directed to Israel (northern kingdom)**
  - But written from Judah (southern kingdom)
- **God delivers a very harsh judgment on Israel – but God’s *hesed* love and compassion cannot – finally – let Israel go**
  - *Hesed is a pursing love that is so enduring that it persists beyond any sin or betrayal to mend brokenness and graciously extend forgiveness*

# The Minor Prophets

- Hosea ←
- Joel
- Amos
- Obadiah
- Jonah
- Micah
  - Period of Assyrian power
- Nahum
- Habakkuk
- Zephaniah
  - Decline of Assyria
- Haggai
- Zechariah
- Malachi
  - Post exilic period

# Again With These Pesky Kings

- Judah
  - **792 Uziah** ←
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# Hosea – Didn't Get A Girl Just Like The Girl That Married Dear Old Dad

- **Hosea**
  - Gets married to an adulterous woman - a prostitute
  - Has a son
  - Has 2 more children, apparently not his
  - His wife leaves him
  - He finds her, has to redeem her to bring her back
- **Gomer**
  - Prodigal son scenario – except she makes no effort to help herself
  - Hosea seeks her – he recommits to her
- **Parallel with how God's people treat God**
  - And how God continues to seek us out - the hound of heaven
  - God's love that cannot – finally – let us go

# God's People Are Lost .....

- **Religion – other gods, involved in cults**
  - “They consult a wooden idol and are answered by a stick of wood.” 4:12
  - “With their silver and gold they make idols for themselves to their own destruction. Throw out your calf-idol, O Samaria!” 8:4
- **Politics – shabby intrigues, looking for help from dubious geopolitical partners**
  - “Ephraim is like a dove, easily deceived and senseless - now calling to Egypt, now turning to Assyria.” 7:11
- **Morals – a society with unbridled sex and violence**
  - “There is only cursing, lying and murder, stealing and adultery ..” 4:2

# ... With A Gross Misunderstanding Of What God Wants

- **They think God wants more “religion”**
  - **Their response: more sacrifices**
    - Hosea 8:13 – “They offer sacrifices given to me and they eat the meat, but the Lord is not pleased with them.”
    - Hosea 5:6: “When they go with their flocks and herds to seek the Lord, they will not find him.”
- **They bring him things – but He wants their hearts**
  - **Repentant, wholly and forever His**

# David Said It Well

- **Psalm 51:16-17: “<sup>16</sup> You do not delight in sacrifice, or I would bring it; you do not take pleasure in burnt offerings. <sup>17</sup> The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart, O God, you will not despise.”**

# Who And What Hurts Us The Most

- **A. Jilted by a boy or girl friend**
- **B. Argument with a close friend**
- **C. Parent-child estrangement**
- **D. Rebuff of a stranger**
- **E. Betrayal in a marriage**

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# How Can God Respond To Our Betrayals?

# Side Out God

- **God can be cool**
  - **5:6: “He has withdrawn from them”**
  - **4:17: “Ephraim is joined to idols; leave him alone.”**
  - **8:7: “They sow the wind and reap the whirlwind.**

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  - 9:9: “God will remember their wickedness and punish them for their sins.”

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- **God can be tender**
  - 11:8: “How can I give you up, Ephraim? ... all my compassion is aroused.”
  - 14:4: “I will heal their waywardness and love them freely.”

# Hosea: I Signed Up For This???

- **Hosea 1: 2-3a: “<sup>2</sup> When the Lord began to speak through Hosea, the Lord said to him, ‘Go, take to yourself an adulterous wife and children of unfaithfulness, because the land is guilty of the vilest adultery in departing from the Lord.’ <sup>3</sup> So he married Gomer daughter of Diblaim ...”**

# The First Portent: The Boy Jezreel

- **Hosea 1:3b-4: “<sup>3b</sup> and she conceived and bore him a son. <sup>4</sup> Then the Lord said to Hosea, ‘Call him Jezreel, because I will soon punish the house of Jehu for the massacre at Jezreel, and I will put an end to the kingdom of Israel. <sup>5</sup> In that day I will break Israel’s bow in the valley of Jezreel.’”**

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# The 2nd Portent: The Girl ‘Not Loved’

- **Hosea 1:6-7: “<sup>6</sup> Gomer conceived again and gave birth to a daughter. Then the Lord said to Hosea, ‘Call her Lo-Ruhamah, for I will no longer show love to the house of Israel, that I should at all forgive them. <sup>7</sup> Yet I will show love to the house of Judah; and I will save them – not by bow, sword, or battle, or by horses and horsemen, but by the Lord their God.’”**

# Ouch – For Hosea And Israel

- **Hosea - the daughter is probably not his**
  - 1:3: “She conceived and bore him a son.”
  - 1:6: “She conceived and gave birth to a daughter.”
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- **Israel - The nation is going to lose a war – but God is going to save their southern cousins**

# God's Love And Forgiveness Are Infinite – But He Is A Judge

- **God extends mercy and forgiveness to us – what is our obligation?**
  - What if there is no response?
  - What if we don't change?

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- **There comes a point at which the only thing left for God is to say:**
  - “O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, you who kill the prophets and stone those sent to you, how often I have longed to gather your children together ... but you were not willing! Look, your house is left to you desolate.” Luke 13:34-35
  - “I will forsake my house, abandon my inheritance; I will give the one I love into the hands of her enemies” Jeremiah 12:7

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- **II Chronicles 7:14: “If my people, who are called by my name, will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then will I hear from heaven and will forgive their sin and will heal their land.”**

# David Said It Well

- **Psalm 19:12-14: “<sup>12</sup> Who can discern his errors? Forgive my hidden faults.<sup>13</sup> Keep your servant also from willful sins; may they not rule over me. Then will I be blameless, innocent of great transgression. <sup>14</sup> May the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be pleasing in your sight, O Lord, my Rock and my Redeemer.”**

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# His Love Means A Course Of Action

- **It meant miraculous deliverance for Judah**
- **Isaiah 37:14,20: “<sup>14</sup> Hezekiah received the letter from the [Assyrian] messengers and read it. Then he went up to the temple of the Lord and spread it out before the Lord ... <sup>20</sup> ‘Now, O Lord our God, deliver us from his hand, so that all the kingdoms on earth may know that you alone, O Lord, are God.’”**

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- **Isaiah 37:36-37: “<sup>36</sup> Then the angel of the Lord went out and put to death 185,000 men in the Assyrian camp. When the people got up the next morning – there were all the dead bodies. <sup>37</sup> So Sennacherib king of Assyria broke camp and withdrew. He returned to Nineveh and stayed there.”**

# The 3<sup>rd</sup> Portent: The Boy “Not My People”

- Hosea 1:8-9: “<sup>8</sup> After she had weaned Lo-Ruhamah, Gomer had another son.<sup>9</sup> ‘Call him Lo-Ammi, for you are not my people, and I am not your God.’”

# In Football, This Would Be Piling On

- **The 3<sup>rd</sup> child, like his sister, was not Hosea's**
  - “Gomer had another son.”
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  - To the people, God is nominally their God
  - **But He is not for sharing – the presence of other gods denies the relationship**

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  - **So how are you feeling right about now?**

# The Three Portents Together – Worse Than What Scrooge Saw

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# Oracles Are Not Irrevocable Sentences

- **Jeremiah 18:5-8: “<sup>5</sup> Then the word of the Lord came to me: <sup>6</sup> ‘O house of Israel, can I not do with you as this potter does?’ declares the Lord. ‘Like clay in the hands of the potter, so are you in my hand, O house of Israel. <sup>7</sup> If at any time I announce that a nation or kingdom is to be uprooted, torn down and destroyed, <sup>8</sup> and if that nation I warn repents of its evil, then I will relent and not inflict on it the disaster I had planned.’”**

# Essential Questions

- **With what other gods are you trying to share God?**
  - The presence of other gods flatly denies the relationship
- **Are you giving him what He wants – or what is merely easy or expedient for you?**

# Next Week

- **Gomer walks away from Hosea**
  - **But Hosea simply will not let her go**

# Despite It All, God Is Merciful

- **Hosea 1:10-2:1: “<sup>10</sup> Yet the Israelites will be like the seashore, which cannot be measured or counted. In the place where it was said to him, ‘You are not my people,’ they will be called ‘sons of the living God.’<sup>11</sup> The people of Judah and the people of Israel will be reunited, and they will appoint one leader and will come up out of the land, for great will be the day of Jezreel. <sup>1</sup> ‘Say of your brothers. ‘My people,’ and of your sisters, ‘My loved one.’”**

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- **What do you notice about this passage?**

# Seismic Shift

- **Three oracles reversed**
  - “You are not my people” becomes “sons of the living God” and “my people”
  - “You are not loved” becomes “my loved one”
  - “I will punish you” becomes “you will be like the sand on the seashore”
- **God’s past promise to Abraham**
  - A promise of a family reunion
- **But note the tense – future**
  - “will be like”
  - “will be called”
  - “will be reunited”

# Consequences Are Real

- **Isaiah 10:20-24:** “<sup>20</sup> In that day the remnant of Israel, the survivors of the house of Jacob, will no longer rely on him who struck them down, but will truly rely on the Lord, the Holy One of Israel. <sup>21</sup> A remnant will return, a remnant of Jacob will return to the Mighty God. <sup>22</sup> Though your people, O Israel, be like the sand of the sea, only a remnant will return. Destruction has been decreed, overwhelming and righteous. <sup>23</sup> The Lord, the Lord Almighty, will carry out the destruction decreed upon the whole land.”

# Thread Of God's Initial Promise

- **Genesis: Abraham's descendants compared to dust, sand, and stars**
- **Hosea 1:10: "Yet the Israelites will be like the sand on the seashore, which cannot be measured or counted."**

# Reunion – Near Future ...

- **II Chronicles 30: Elements of 5 tribes come to Jerusalem at invitation of King Hezekiah**
- **II Chronicles 34 and 35: King Josiah includes Israel in his reforms**
- **Post-exile**
  - **Some northern tribes settle in Jerusalem**
  - **Ezra offer “twelve bulls for all Israel” upon return from Babylon (Ezra 8:35)**
- **Paul – speaks to Agrippa of “our twelve tribes” waiting the hope of Israel (Acts 26:7)**

# ...And Far Future with Paul ...

- Paul quotes Hosea to include you and me
- Romans 9:22-26: “<sup>22</sup> What if God, choosing to show his wrath and make his power known, bore with great patience the objects of his wrath – prepared for destruction? <sup>23</sup> What if he did this to make the riches of his glory known to the objects of his mercy, whom he prepared in advance for his glory – <sup>24</sup> even us, whom he also called, not only from the Jews but also from the Gentiles? <sup>25</sup> As he says in Hosea: ‘I will call them ‘my people’ who are not my people; and I will call her ‘my loved one’ who is not my loved one,’ <sup>26</sup> and ‘It will happen that in the very place where it was said to them, ‘You are not my people,’ they will be called ‘sons of the living God.’”

# ...And Peter

- **I Peter 2:9-10: “<sup>9</sup> But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness and into his wonderful light. <sup>10</sup> Once you were not a people, but now you are the people of God; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.”**

# Shift In Focus

- **Hosea 2:2-4: “<sup>2</sup> ‘Rebuke your mother, rebuke her for she is not my wife, and I am not her husband. Let her remove the adulterous look from her face and the unfaithfulness from between her breasts.<sup>3</sup> Otherwise I will strip her naked and make her as bare as on the day she was born; I will make her like a desert, turn her into a parched land, and slay her with thirst.<sup>4</sup> I will not show my love to her children, because they are the children of adultery.’”**

# Shift In Focus

- **The wife becomes the focus**
  - Prior focus was the children
- **Pleading**
  - Not begging or whining
  - Making a legal statement of fact
  - “Is she not my wife? And I her husband?”
- **Call to repentance**
  - Easier to apologize than to stop
- **God is not some aging cuckold**
  - Some with whom to reckon
  - Full capable of making the situation worse

# We Often Don't See The Root Cause

- **Hosea 2:5-8: “<sup>5</sup> Their mother has been unfaithful and has conceived them in disgrace. She said, ‘I will go after my lovers, who gave me my food and my water, my wool and my linen, my oil and my drink.’<sup>6</sup> Therefore I will block her path with thorn bushes’ I will wall her in so that she cannot find her way.<sup>7</sup> She will chase after her lovers but not catch them; she will look for them but not find them. Then she will say. ‘I will go back to my husband as at first, for then I was better off than now.’<sup>8</sup> She has not acknowledged that I was the one who gave her the grain, the new wine and oil, who lavished on her the silver and gold --- which they used for Baal.”**

# The Gavel Descends

- Hosea 2:9-13: “<sup>9</sup> ‘Therefore I will take away my grain when it ripens, and my new wine when it is ready. I will take back my wool and my linen, intended to cover her nakedness. <sup>10</sup> So now I will expose her lewdness before the eyes of her lovers; no one will take her out of my hands. <sup>11</sup> I will stop all her celebrations; her yearly festivals, her New Moons, her Sabbath days – all her appointed feasts. <sup>12</sup> I will ruin her vines and her fig trees, which she said were her pay from her lovers; I will make them a thicket, and wild animals will devour them. <sup>13</sup> I will punish her for the days she burned incense to the Baals; she decked herself with rings and jewelry, and went after her lovers, but me she forgot,’ declares the Lord.”

# But Then – The Clouds Part

- **Hosea 2:14-17: “<sup>14</sup> ‘Therefore I am now going to allure her; I will lead her into the desert and speak tenderly to her. <sup>15</sup> There I will give her back her vineyards, and will make the Valley of Achor a door of hope There she will sing as in the days of her youth, as in the day she came up out of Egypt.’ <sup>16</sup> ‘In that day,’ declares the Lord, ‘you will call me ‘my husband’; you will no longer call me ‘my master.’ <sup>17</sup> I will remove the names of the Baals from her lips; no longer will their names be invoked.””**

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# God's Love – What Is It Not?

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- **It is not**
  - **Blind**
  - **Coercive**